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ABSTRACT

With the aid of a grant from the Advanced Institutional Development Program, a group of Central YMCA Community College (CYCC) faculty were given released time to inquire into curriculum priorities. This document establishes the focal points of future curriculum discussions and outlines the developments which this faculty group hopes will ensue as a result of their inquiry. A five-year action plan, based on other recent studies conducted at CYCC, is proposed for the orderly implementation of curriculum development, maintaining student welfare and educational experience as the primary target. Strengths and weaknesses of the present structure and possible means of improvement are noted in sections on student needs, special curricula for ethnic and social minority groups, interdepartmental and interdisciplinary programs, extension programs, flexible scheduling, support services, performance objectives, evaluation of instruction, alternative ways of earning credit, new programs, and course and material development. A hierarchy of priority issues to be confronted from spring 1975 through spring 1976, and the rationales for the selection of specific priorities are presented. New courses and material development are designated as continuing concerns to insure significant achievements for the entire curriculum and to provide the basis for other research. (AH)

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CENTRAL YMCA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

January, 1975

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PREFACE

This is an unusual report.

The group that put it together was not appointed in the usual manner but rather selected from the faculty by a committee representative of the whole institution. The members of the group were selected on the basis of their commitment, enthusiasm, and insight. They were not chosen for their unanimity of point of view. So, while the report makes recommendations, it also raises fundamental issues which can be ignored only at our peril.

The document takes our history seriously. Reports and studies of our recent past have been analyzed and portions relevant to the development of curriculum accounted for. This approach does not imply an uncritical acceptance of these documents but rather a recognition that they are neglected at the risk of recommending unconsidered action.

It should be pointed out that this is the first time at CYCC that faculty have been released from a part of their teaching responsibilities to inquire into curriculum priorities. The insights gained through this freedom would not have been possible without a grant from the Advanced Institutional Development Program under Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Finally, in accordance with the guidelines of the AIDP, this document establishes the focal points of the curriculum discussions and developments which the group hopes will ensue. The report is a beginning rather than the end of an ongoing process of development. It begins with an introduction but does not end with a conclusion. Instead, it ends with one of the first steps in the dialogue which the group urges upon the entire CYCC community. This is a step in the direction of fostering acceptance of practical inquiry as a valid part of institutional life. A member of the group was asked to critique its own report in such a way as to suggest a model for a continuing dialogue about the contents of the report. Such a dialogue is crucial to adequate understanding of the issues and meaningful actions. Inasmuch as the report adequately represents our past efforts to design relevant curricula and inasmuch as it identifies significant issues, it is a document to be reckoned with in the future life of the College.

FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN
FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

The following is a five-year plan of action aimed at accomplishing the goals and objectives that concern curriculum development as set forth in various other recent studies of Central YMCA Community College. It synthesizes and flows from the recommendations of these various plans that have been developed and presented to CYCC during the past two years. These plans include the following:

A. The Self Study of the Central YMCA Community College, 1973. At the end of each chapter are "Strengths," "Areas of Concern" and "Recommendations." These "Strengths," "Areas of Concern" and "Recommendations" represent the conclusions of committees which involved a major part of the faculty, which met intensively over a period of several months, and which covered every facet of CYCC's operation. Even though the reports from the various committees were rewritten and honed into a uniform format, certain needs demanding concentrated effort in order to start on a solution present themselves in the document.

B. The Report of a Visit to Central YMCA Community College, Chicago, Illinois, March 4-7, 1974 for the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

The first half of this document includes program strengths and weaknesses in the text, but in the last half there are sections entitled, "Program Strengths" and "Weaknesses" following evaluations of the various divisions of the college. Woven into the text, and enumerated under "Weaknesses" are the recommendations of the visiting team of experts who visited and evaluated the college in March, 1974.

C. Dr. Donald A. Canar's Response to the Report of the Evaluation Team Visit, March 4-7, 1974. Dr. Canar's response is dated July 15, 1974. Dr. Canar lists "a substantial number of actions (that) are taking place as a result of the recommendations of the evaluation team."

D. Goals and Objective (sic) Committee Report, Central YMCA Community College by Mary Lou Doherty and Joan Hamm, June, 1973.

This report was submitted as part of the College Operations Committee Report in the Self Study. Two chapters -- "Major Findings and Identification of Problem Areas," and Summary of Interviews," are concerned with identifying problems in the college.

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E. A Ten Year Plan was presented to the Board of Directors by the Educational Group of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago, Central YMCA Community College and High School on June 26, 1974. The Ten Year Plan presents pertinent facts and apparent or probable trends about "economic, demographic, social, cultural, and political impacts, as well as 'the competition'," Then, "based upon the assumptions and the analyses agreed upon in the basic Ten Year Plan document and a review of our situation as the Fall semester opened," there followed a statement of major objectives for 1974-75. Along with the Ten Year Plan were the minutes of the November 27, 1974 board meeting at which the Ten Year Plan was presented.

F. REPORT OF CONSULTATION MADE AT THE CENTRAL YMCA COMMUNITY COLLEGE BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR FOREIGN STUDENT AFFAIRS November 1-2, 1972.

The report of this consultation was made at the request of college officials. It describes the situation of foreign students at CYCC in the areas of admissions, advisement, language study, housing, and community programs. It then contrasts the situation here with the norm at other colleges that accept large numbers of foreign students and offers recommendations. It also lists a Bibliography of helpful references in the field of educating foreign students at colleges in the United States.

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Each of these documents enumerates strengths and weaknesses at Central YMCA Community College. The Self-Study lists "areas of concern and recommendations." The Report of the NCA Visit lists "weaknesses." Dr. Canar's Response lists "actions." The College Operations Committee Report identifies "problem areas." The Ten Year Plan includes "objectives." And The MAPSA Report lists "recommendations."

With these problems in mind, the college developed and presented a plan, and was granted funding from the Office of Education, HEW, through the Advanced Institutional Development Program section to:

A. "help us move toward the attainment of our institutional mission" and to

B. "address our attention and our resources to those areas that need improvement..."
Canar in Response (pp. 1,5.)

As part of the AID Program, six released-time faculty members were charged with formulating a five-year plan of action "to create a process enabling the institution to engage in continuous curriculum development and instructional renewal." AIDP text. (p. 57) This document is an attempt to carry out this directive.

II. AREAS OF CONCERN

The first step in making a plan is to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the structure. This has been done extensively and recently in the aforementioned documents. There is a high degree of agreement and correlation among the documents as to where institutional energy and resources should be directed. Many of the areas that need improvement are in the field of curriculum development. The focus of this paper is to plan the orderly implementation of curriculum development keeping the students' welfare and educational experience as our primary target. Following are the areas of concern as identified by the released time faculty with correlated suggestions found in the above documents. Some of the concerns were approached with a study by an individual faculty member as to what a released time person should accomplish in this area. Others are merely listed. Where there is an available study by a released time faculty member, it is referred to in the appendix.

A. PATHS THROUGH CYCC

After enrolling and being placed in classes, students may journey through CYCC to graduation, transfer to another school, to job placement, or they may "stop-in/stop-out." A study and evaluation of what happens to the students as the result of various curricula in the institution is needed. Each step along these paths needs evaluation and, where necessary, remedial action.

The documents especially detailed a need for improvement in placement, articulation and job placement. The Self-Study stated that CYCC has an "unusually inefficient system of moving students through the institution toward career or

higher educational goals. This often results from availability of funding (being used) as an overriding factor in assessing the indices of 'needed' educational services." (p. 1) The Self-Study recommends that CYCC "explore, design and implement improved instruments and processes for student placement." (p. 7) The AID Program, in fact, lists "Assessment and Placement" as one of the five objectives in the Second Chance Education program plan.

The Self-Study asserted that "there is a lack of information for advisors and students on transfer and occupational opportunities (p. 1) . . .a review of transcripts from other schools indicates a high rate of dropouts (for transfer students from CYCC) for academic reasons" (p. 28) . . .and recommended that CYCC "aggressively improve articulation information exchanges with the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle and Roosevelt University." (p. 29) The Self-Study also reported that "insufficient data was available on students moving into the job market and the effect of training CYCC had on their job performance." (p. 29) It recommended that CYCC "pursue cooperative educational relationships with industry to obtain the triple benefits of student experience in areas of study, financial support, and feedback on adequacy of curricula." (p. 2)

The Report of the NCA Visit emphasized the need for sophisticated data collection, analysis and interpretation in following students after they first leave the various practical curricula at CYCC. The need for school-wide studies, implementation, and communication of research plans and research results pertaining to paths through the school is crucial. This will be done. It is being done by various people in different areas of the institution. The released time group believes that these various studies should be pulled together, supplemented and acted on by a released time faculty member bringing a curriculum viewpoint to bear.

B. SPECIAL CURRICULA FOR ETHNIC AND SOCIAL MINORITY GROUPS AND CROSS-CULTURAL EDUCATION.

Because of the unique composition of the student body at CYCC there is an opportunity and challenge for three-way cross-cultural education. First, the individual embedded in his own cultural and linguistic matrix needs to strengthen awareness of his heritage and contributions. At the same time, life in a complex society demands expertise in dealing with its norms. It is just as important for a student to be aware of other minority cultures. In bilingual education, for example, this area of research focuses on the expansion of bilingual programs on campus and in extensions to facilitate the access to higher education to persons with Spanish as their native tongue. There is a paper on "Programs for the Spanish Minority" by A. Marzal in the appendix. These programs will furnish a prototype for other bi-lingual education as the need arises.

The other side of the problem is the need for American citizens and visitors to this country to know not only the mainstream culture, but also the contributions of its many compenents. Current examples at CYCC are International Awareness Seminar, and the classes in African Studies and African Literature in the Abacus program. Cross-cultural programs can be exported to the community. While there are curricular difficulties for the foreign students, their difficulties are often linked with inadequate support services. The College Operation Committee Report stated, "the college must begin to deal honestly (in action, not rhetoric) with the place of foreign students in the life of our institution," (last page) The Self-Study called for the establishment of "a faculty-assisted international student activities policy group." (p. 10) The NAFSA Report stated,

"Any institution which accepts foreign students must also assume certain continuing obligations to them...be mindful of the foreign students' special problems, and, within the limits of their capabilities, must make suitable provisions to meet them." (p. 4)

We feel that released-time is necessary to gain momentum and initiate some of the most basic services which are now lacking to foreign students.

C. Interdepartmental and Interdisciplinary Programs

This area of research focuses on the present departmental structure of the college and examines its validity and usefulness in the context of our goals and student population.

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There is a need for a consideration of the types of material that require an interdisciplinary approach and the relationship between the interdisciplinary programs and the departments. Two papers, "Departmental and Interdisciplinary Programs in a Framework of Curriculum Relationships" by A. Marzal, and "Some Structural Considerations on a Monstrous Situation is Developing" are in the appendix.

This area also calls for a look at course clusters including an examination of the rationale for clustering the courses which we presently offer together, i.e. QI, Abacus, etc. A comparison of the results aimed for and the actual results should be made. There should also be an investigation of the rationale that has been used for similar clustering at other institutions.

D. COLLEGE EXTENSIONS IN THE COMMUNITY

The Ten Year Plan in the presentation to the board called for the "development of off-campus extended learning centers," (p. 18) and also observed that "education will become more of a continuing lifetime process." (p.7) When setting up extension programs, CYCC should consider the strategies for establishing student bases. Also, there should be a study of the options the institution is trying to create in making extension courses available. A paper titled "College Extensions in the Community and New Courses" by Jim Mitchell is in the appendix.

E. CALENDARING AND FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING

The Ten Year Plan calls for the institution of a "structure of

more short term instructional programming and increased flexibility in scheduling." (p. 17)"...Classes will be structured to recognize personal needs of students." (p. 7) Even though flexible scheduling is being actively pursued now by other groups, curriculum concerns still abound in this area. Needed are studies of the effect of calendar changes upon course offerings, of the relationship between scheduling and learning and forgetting curves, and of student performance under different calendaring schemes. In addition, consideration must be given to the designing of four-week courses that are not mere condensations of semester-length courses, and the designing of eight-week individual skill-learning courses, as well as shorter self-paced units.

F. SUPPORT SERVICES

We need to connect the support services with the curriculum to provide a coherent, unified college experience for our student body. We need an agreed upon set of manuals that have been devised by the various operational departments. In the same sense that the catalog is a manual for the academic courses offered, we also need manuals for documentation of processes and procedures in the following areas:

1. Vocational and career counseling
2. Academic advising
3. Peer counseling
4. Using library resources
5. Cataloging and creating Audio-visual materials

6. Academic Placing of students

7. Training of work/study students

The procedures described in the manuals should dovetail so that new students can perceive what steps are necessary for them to achieve their desired goals. Included in this area is the recommendation that a revision of the placement test be given priority under the AID Program. This revision (see paper by C. Heltman in the appendix), placed within the structure of guidance offered by the Student Services Department, should provide for a given student's aspiration, aptitudes, interest, past or current achievements.

G. PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

We must consider performance objectives in two ways -- vertically and horizontally. As students move vertically through courses in a department they build skills and knowledge. We recommend content analysis and functional organization of the behavioral objectives of each class to determine if a class actually prepares the student for the next class. In addition, excessive overlap should be eliminated. Considered horizontally, performance objectives should define the basic concepts, definitions and skills in courses of the same level regardless of content.

Listings of behavioral objectives are currently being produced. Each teacher within each department is writing the performance objectives that students should accomplish in each class. We feel that released time will be needed to draw together, evaluate and summarize these reports.

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H. EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION

The Report of the NCA Visit charged that a "lack of documentation of preparation of the part-time faculty and a few of the full-time faculty for their teaching assignments, the absence of follow-up studies of students and the lack of evaluation would make any assessment of the quality of instruction speculative." (p. 26)

"The evaluation of instruction is directed toward awarding some degree of tenure rather than improvement of the quality of instruction." (p. 26) The Self-Study stated, "Faculty and provost find it difficult to formulate and deal with negative evaluations. Student evaluations are almost uniformly in the 'above average' slot." (p. 15) It recommends a "review of the evaluation process for faculty and establishment of a system for the collection of unbiased data on teaching performances." (p. 15) It also recommends the implementation of "a continuous program of evaluation of all courses and curricula, and the organization of an in-service program to train faculty in the new methods and techniques of instruction and supportive technologies." (p. 7)

Continuing and expediting this thrust towards a continuing evaluative process, the AID Program has listed "Faculty Evaluation and Training" as one of the five objectives in its Program Plan for Second Chance Education. As one of the objectives in the AID Program, the evaluation of teachers is being pursued by another group.

But the released time faculty feel there are specific curriculum concerns in deciding what methods of evaluation of instruction are appropriate for CYCC and what methods of development and improvement of instruction are available and appropriate for CYCC. There is a great need to use evaluations to promote professional growth instead of the present method.

I. ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF EARNING CREDIT

This area of research focuses on the possibility of giving college credit to students engaged in educational activities other than the traditional classroom-centered course instruction. A paper titled "Alternative Ways of Earning Credit, Based on Experience or Training," by A. Marzal is in the appendix. The Ten Year Plan speaks of college credit for "life experience and on the job training. Methods will be developed to recognize and utilize out-of-school experience and competencies as a basis for further formal education." (p. 6)

Concerning alternative ways of earning credit we need to determine what the meaning of credit is and how it functions in and out of the institution. We need to determine if credit is the only system of recording performance. We need to consider the advantages and disadvantages of offering credit for activities other than those we presently recognize, for example: life experience, travel, supervised work. We need to consider the consequent effects upon curriculum development. Study is needed to assure alternative ways of earning credit

would be compatible with the performance objectives in part G.

J. CREATE MARKETS FOR NEW PROGRAMS

It should be recognized that designing curricula simply to follow markets has the danger of dissipating institutional energies and subverting curricular goals. It is, therefore, necessary to develop markets for academically sound and significant programs which grow out of faculty efforts to make education meaningful for both the student and the community.

K. NEW OR REVISED COURSES

In this item the word new possibly means a course without a new name or a new number, and without new content, but completely redesigned to accommodate the needs of the students. The Self-Study stated that "too often an educational program is conceptualized with a specific employment end in view, but when the employment picture changes the program is not modified to keep pace." (p. 1) The Report of the NCA Visit recommended that there be "a range of in-service or upgrading offerings for business, professional and paraprofessional employment within downtown Chicago," (p. 24) The Ten Year Plan states that a changing world will "require skilled persons to train for a number of different and successive occupations or professions in a lifetime." (p. 6) The Ten Year Plan also states "more employers will fund employees' part time study relevant to their employment." (p. 6)

The released time faculty sees a need to consider how students can propose new courses.

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We should look for available models for establishing student-suggested courses. We need to study how much weight the students' perceptions of their needs and goals should carry in establishing or cancelling courses. A study should be made of the alternative ways of getting new courses into the curriculum here and at other institutions.

L. MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Report of the NCA Visit stated that "heavy personal faculty involvement with students is important and is needed, but it has left little time for resource development and curriculum review." (p. 15) "Faculty members are in need of released time to develop new courses and new teaching methods which would provide an improved learning climate for the heterogeneous group of students served by the college." (p. 28) The Self-Study recommended that there be an "exploration of the use of released time to provide faculty with the opportunity to produce audio tapes and materials." (p. 9)

The development of materials is a painstaking and time-consuming pursuit. If it is to be done well, those willing to undergo the long hours and strenuous effort should be awarded the time in which to do so.

M. OTHER CONCERNS

The released time faculty also endorse study and action on these subjects:

1. Student recruitment
2. Attrition and Retention of Students

3. Support Programs

4. Records Systems

But we feel other groups in the school are undertaking these tasks.

One criticism from the Report of the NCA Visit was that "laboratory facilities and equipment are inadequate in the Medical Laboratory Technology programs." (p. 20) The limitation of curriculum by the lack of necessary equipment is self-evident, not to be remedied by committee study or released time, and is a fact in virtually every department in the school.

III. PRIORITIES

While many of the problems identified above are endemic to metropolitan junior colleges with all commuter students, this should not preclude CYCC's recognizing its problems and vigorously seeking solutions to them.

Just as important as identifying areas of proposed action is establishing priorities. Priorities for released time are suggested by:

A. The urgency of the need for creation or improvement of the program.

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B. Chronological considerations of which programs logically precede (or follow) other programs.

C. Practical considerations of availability of materials and personnel who are interested in a specific area.

D. Available funding.

The Ten Year Plan stated "about the only certainty concerning the future is that change is its essence. Therefore, implementation can be dealt out only in short term time segments such as a year at a time." (p. 16) The released time faculty, following this reasoning, thinks that it would fulfill its task better by determining some priorities in dealing with the areas of research presented above for only the next three semesters.

The assigning of certain priorities to each of the three coming semesters means that faculty may ask for released time under the AID Program grant to do research on those areas. Faculty or committees, who want to do research on the areas designated for a semester or in any other area of research identified by the released time faculty without released time under AIDP, may, of course, initiate their own research. It is strongly recommended, however, that they consult with the Institutional Research Office in order to take advantage of available resources and in order that work may not be duplicated. There should be an index of all CYCC research projects --- current and completed.

This is not a synopsis of all the recommendations and suggestions to be found in the documents that were investigated. It is,

rather, a summary of those recommendations that specifically relate to curriculum development. Some of the other areas are mentioned in the AID Program. The Institutional Research Office should be contacted for proposals for released time in those other areas.

The following priorities are determined for the next three semesters:

Spring Semester, 1975	Fall Semester, 1975	Spring Semester, 1976
	SPECIAL CONCERNS	
A. Paths through CYCC Graduation Successful transfer Job placement Stop-in/stop-out	C. Interdisciplinary and interdepartal Programs	G. Performance objectives
	D. College Extensions in the community	H. Evaluation of instruction
B. Special curricula for ethnic and social minority groups, and cross-cultural education.	E. Calendaring-Flexible scheduling	I. Alternate ways of earning credit
	F. Curriculum Support Services	J. Create markets for new programs
	CONTINUING CONCERNS	
K. New or Revised Courses	K. New or Revised Courses	K. New or Revised Courses
L. Material Development	L. Material Development	L. Material Development

Guidelines for submitting and evaluating proposals can be found in Appendix C.

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The Spring, 1975 priorities were dictated by the criteria stated above (see A to D). It was felt more orderly to divide our priorities into continuing and special concerns.

Special concerns: Priorities A through J are to provide a research foundation during the course of one semester within the next eighteen months. Each such activity should, generally speaking, generate sufficient momentum to proceed thereafter without additional released time. In the case that an area or one of its important ramifications assigned to a semester has not been the object of research during that semester, it is suggested that proposals for released time for research on that area or on that ramification be submitted for the following semester or semesters, together with the priorities proper of said semester. The Task Force will evaluate such proposals.

Continuing concerns: Since all of the documents quoted throughout this report emphasized curricular development needs which can only be met through released time, the group has accorded a slot each semester for fundamental content revision as well as one for material and resources development.

Rationale for specific priorities:

A. The paths through CYCC

The urgency of this item is dictated by the need for coherent advising information that would be transfer related and job related. These concerns direct us to recommend beginning a study of the core and specific departmental curricula. Since what is done in this area is a basis for what is done in many other areas, the released time group has given this top priority.

B. Special curricula for ethnic and social minority groups and cross-cultural education:

This is an idea whose time is ripe -- there is opportunity and interest in developing bi-lingual and cross-cultural curricula at CYCC at this time. The institution is eminently suited to this kind of special curriculum. Contact and interaction with other institutions lie within the CYCC goals. Additional funding for projects in this sphere seems likely. The group sees the opportunity for exerting educational leadership here.

C. Interdisciplinary and interdepartmental programs:

In view of the diverse backgrounds and interests of our student body, because of the continued strength of special programs (e.g. Quest for Identity, Abacus, International Dimensions), and because of the needs for experimentation in teaching methods, content and style, the released time group recommends that proposals be encouraged for both types of research in this area. This topic is serially related to the topic above and will build upon accomplishments realized in spring, 1975 under priority B.

D. College extensions in the community:

This priority is directly related to the establishment of successful college extension centers. One aspect of success is the unification of the centers with the educational direction and purpose of the main campus. Studies are needed to assess the effectiveness of off-campus curricular offerings, and studies of independent extension

centers are also needed. This group has in mind both comprehensive and in-depth studies.

E. Calendaring - flexible scheduling:

As stated elsewhere in this report (p.9), meeting the scheduling needs of students implies that new calendaring approaches be investigated. New calendaring, in turn, requires the development of courses to meet the new time frames. New calendaring also requires trying out the resulting curricular revisions and gathering data about their effects upon students. The group feels that studies of such innovations are necessary to assure that institutional commitment is appropriately guided.

F. Curriculum support services:

Studies are needed to demonstrate ways in which support services and curricula may be more effectively coordinated. Such studies should treat the questions of where, when and how support services may be dealt with as elements of specific courses, and the converse - where, when and how curricular elements may be dealt with outside the classroom by facets of the support services group. (See p. 10 for list.) Measurements of current use and practice in these interrelated areas are currently lacking.

G. Performance objectives:

Studies are needed for comparison of student achievement in courses where performance objectives are explicitly stated and in courses without such statements. Studies

are needed to compare effects of performance objectives upon both teacher and student behavio within departments, across courses, and between departments across levels, e.g., ENG 096, 101, 102; and ENG 101, MAT 101, SSC 101. The question of how performance objectives function at basic course levels as compared with advanced course levels needs study, as does the efficiency of the method for curriculum planning. Studies of performance objective outcomes appear most relevant after an interval has elapsed permitting standard, revised and innovative curricula to become operational.

H. Evaluation of instruction:

We anticipate a great deal of curricular change in the next two or three years. It would be interesting to know whether such change is related to tenure. If so, this would have implications regarding tenured and non-tenured faculty making curricular changes. Studies on self-evaluation and self-improvement of instruction should also be encouraged as additional or, perhaps, alternative factors in the evaluation procedure.

Evaluation of instruction is closely related to performance objectives and college extensions, and must logically follow research results from activities associated with them. Several of the reports surveyed in the preparation of this document noted the limited opportunities for evaluation, coordination and training of part-time faculty as

compared to the opportunities for the main campus full-time faculty. These limitations are aggravated by the separation in time and space of part and full-time faculty. Care must be taken to provide training in writing performance objectives to all faculty -- full and part-time.

I. Alternate ways of earning credit:

Studies of this nature follow upon the systematic development of course objectives. Options to be investigated include credit by examination, written and oral, and performance of specific skills. See Appendix F for fuller descriptions of possibilities. The most meaningful studies in this area will follow the accurate determination of levels.

J. New or revised courses, and

K. Material development:

These activities need and deserve continuing institutional support in order to insure significant achievements for the entire curriculum and to provide the bases for other action research. This recommendation is not new, but was repeatedly suggested in the surveyed reports.

IV. FINAL RECOMMENDATION

There should be an annual up-date of the five-year plan in order to keep in mind constantly not only the overall goals, but also the specific semester by semester objectives of the college.

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This final recommendation is affirmed by the documents as follows:

> The Self-Study recommends that CYCC "design and implement an annual faculty/staff review of institutional goals, objectives and long range plans." (p. 16)
>
> The Report of the NCA Visit states, "There is an urgent need for a master plan which is updated annually." (p. 30)
>
> The College Operations Committee Report says, " There should be a periodic review of progress made toward achieving goals and a periodic re-assessment of the goals themselves." (last page)
>
> The Ten Year Plan recommends, "Each year, the ten year plan and the previous year's activity will be reviewed and evaluated." (p. 16)

The released time faculty recommends that the reviewing and revising of the plan in view of changing needs be done by the Curriculum Committee with the cooperation of the Curriculum Coordinator and the Director of Institutional Research.

Our plan, like all others that detail action and specify a series of possible events in the future, cannot be enduring. The value of the plan is in the process -- as well as the accomplishment. The value is in the understanding that might come from proposing, reviewing and re-thinking all the inter-relationships that influence the various groups within the school and the school in its environment.

POSTSCRIPT AND PRESCRIPT

The group hopes that its report will not be uncritically accepted. Rather, informed discussion is expected and encouraged about the recommendations. What follows here is the beginning of the necessary process of critique and understanding which will make actions based on the recommendations meaningful.

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The great strength and very large contribution of this Five-Year Action Plan for Curriculum Development lies in the integration it has achieved of the diverse sources it drew upon. Each of these sources is the result of a considerable amount of effort on the part of a goodly number of persons sincerely concerned for the College and its students. Each of these groups, however, was a different group. Each was pursuing a somewhat different purpose. Yet this Action Plan has discovered a high degree of agreement among them, has analyzed and then synthesized this into twelve areas of concern, and has presented a plan of priorities for acting on them. It is certainly a significant contribution.

The chief weakness of the Plan is not so much a weakness of the Plan as it is of the way it may be used. The Plan does not, under any of the Areas of Concern, try to make a clear distinc-

tion between the kind of research which could appropriately be undertaken at CYCC and research which we should leave to more research capable institutions such as the large universities. Research which is directed toward producing useful theory or even practical generalizations of widespread applicability is best done by them. Even though we were to try, our probability of success is relatively low. Our research is more appropriately directed toward finding useful answers to our own problems and to preparing materials which will be of direct use to us. If we need the theory or the broad generalizations we should try to find them by a diligent search of the literature or by consulting with recognized experts. We should not try to discover the theory or develop the broad empirical generalizations ourselves.

Consider, for example, the area of Performance Objectives. In discussing its rationale for the priority assigned this area the Plan suggests: "Studies are needed for comparison of student achievement in courses where performance objectives are explicitly stated and in courses without such statements . . . . " The first of these needs is essentially asking the question: Is student achievement greater when performance objectives are explicitly stated? We ought to be able to find the answer in the literature -- in the reporting of research done at more research capable institutions, or through consulting experts. If the answer is yes, then we should direct our efforts toward discovering which particular performance objectives and which ways of using them are most helpful for our students. We should not be researching the first, more basic question.

If the answer cannot be found in the literature or from the experts, then we are faced with a management problem -- not a research problem. Even though our information is incomplete and testing has only been very partial and limited, we may make the management decision to use performance objectives (or to not use them). We may decide that the indications are sufficiently strong for us to decide that we would be better off with them (or without them). We should not be investing our limited resources in researching the basic or the theoretical questions.

Similar comments might be made about the area of Evaluation of Instruction and perhaps about others.

Two other minor questions may also be appropriately asked:
1. Should not the opinions and recommendations of the Released Time Group be identified separately as one of the sources?
2. Is it not possible, or maybe even probable, that some of the areas of Special Concerns may require more than one semester of released time?

Finally, let it be said again, the great strength and contributions of this plan lie in the integration it has achieved of diverse sources. Its application should be guided by the continual asking of the questions: What research is appropriate for us? What should we gain from others?

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